

# Student Nurses in a School Setting

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## MODEL SCHOOL NURSE GUIDELINE

Original Date of Issue: 2014

## **Introduction**

Collaboration between school districts and universities can provide quality public health experiences for nursing students as well as offer a broader array of health services to students and families. Student nurses working in schools obtain clinical experience in caring for the school aged child while gaining an understanding of the broad scope of practice for nurses practicing in the school setting. Significant and rewarding clinical experiences for the student nurse in the school setting requires communication and partnership among the key stakeholders (nursing instructor, the school nurse, and the school administrator).

School nurse practice “is grounded in respect for person, family and other groups and communities and guided by explicit focus of nursing. Nurturing children, promoting their well-being to accommodate their hopes and dreams – including success in school – requires creative integration of multiple ways of knowing and involves understanding, through synthesis of information, within the dynamic context of values and health practice” (Aiken, SREB 2000<sup>1</sup>).

The Clinical Education Partnership Model (CEPM) developed by Kreulen, Bednarz, Wehrwein, and Davis (2008<sup>3</sup>) identified a framework to organize essential elements of clinical education for BSN students in the school setting. The CEPM model recommends that the local school district have specific structures in place (administrative buy-in, practice guidelines and tools, risk management protocols, uniform nursing documentation system, professional development, nursing performance evaluation) and that universities have the curriculum and arrangements to support nursing education in schools (administrative buy-in, community and school nurse practice curriculum, evidence-based self-study modules, faculty development in school nursing, risk management, curriculum/teaching materials, evaluation plan and tools). The student nurse’s role in a school setting, given instruction and direction by the nursing instructor and licensed nurse, provides for a significant clinical experience. The nursing faculty and the school nurse establish the goals for that clinical experience jointly. Student nurses must receive an orientation prior to working in the schools. The orientation includes an overview of the school nurse program, provides information on the details for the clinical experience, and sets the boundaries for student nurse practice.

### **Role of the School Nurse with a Student Nurse in the School Setting**

The school nurse serves as a preceptor for the nursing students in person or by telecommunication during the hours student nurses are in the schools. The school nurse will provide an orientation to the physical building that the student is assigned, be available for student observation as scheduled and provide assistance with development of Individualized Healthcare Plans and other activities. The school nurse provides supervision of the student nurse in collaboration with the nursing instructor.

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<sup>1</sup> Southern Regional Education Board. (2000). *Curriculum and faculty development in community-based care: School nurses and nurse educators collaborate*. E. Aiken, Atlanta, GA: Author.  
[http://publications.sreb.org/2000/00N04\\_CurriculumAndFacultyDev.pdf](http://publications.sreb.org/2000/00N04_CurriculumAndFacultyDev.pdf)

### **Role of the Nursing Instructor in the School Setting**

Faculty from the university and the school nurse collaborate in planning and writing objectives for student nurses' clinical experiences and in determining appropriate school assignments for students. The instructors are available in person or by telecommunication during the hours student nurses are in the schools. In addition, instructors make frequent scheduled and unscheduled visits to each site. The nursing instructor provides supervision of the student nurse.

Note: The registered nurse is always the leader of the school health *nursing* team. The registered nurse, *the expert in nursing and health*, makes the decisions about how care is provided and who provides the care to the child in the school system. As such, only the school registered nurse has the authority to use the title school nurse. All other health staff must be referred to by their title of LPN, Health Assistant, or Student Nurse.

### **Role of the Student Nurse in the School Setting**

The student nurse may be only present in the school building 1-2 days a week depending on their program. The student nurse may be assigned the following in order to meet learning objectives:<sup>2</sup>

<b>Services Provided</b>	<b>Student Nurse</b>
First Aid (Injury and Illness)	X <sup>s</sup>
Health Appraisal	X <sup>s</sup>
Medication Management and Administration	X <sup>s</sup>
Performance of Treatments/Procedures	X <sup>s</sup>
Development of Individualized Health Plan	X
Screening (Vision, Hearing, vital signs, oral health)	X <sup>s</sup>
Immunization Monitoring	X
Review of Records	X
Recording of Data	X
Pediculosis Education and Assessment	X
Health Education	X
Pregnancy Case Management	X <sup>c</sup>
Individual Health Counseling	X <sup>c</sup>
Management of Communicable Disease	X <sup>c</sup>
Referral for Health Problem	X <sup>c</sup>
Participation on Interdisciplinary School Team	O
Parent education (nutrition, asthma, allergies, lead poisoning, oral health, safety)	X <sup>c</sup>
Student health promotion and education (hygiene, asthma, substance abuse)	X <sup>c</sup>
Teacher education (first aid and safety, identifying child abuse, individual student health concerns)	X <sup>c</sup>
Care coordination for families	X <sup>c</sup>

o= Observation

s= Under direct supervision of the school nurse or the nursing faculty

c= with prior individual consultation with school nurse or instructor

Students have access to the student records and will document any activity they have performed. This will require a co-signature from the school nurse (RN) or instructor.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from *A Handbook for Student Nurses to Guide Clinical Experiences in the School Setting*. (2001). *The Journal of School Nursing* 17(4), 217.

<sup>3</sup> Kreulen, G.J., Bednarz, P.K., Wehrwein, T., Davis, J. (2008). Clinical Education Partnership: A model for School District and College of Nursing Collaboration. *The Journal of School Nursing*, 24(6), 360-369.

**Professional Development/Conduct**

The student nurse:

- Knows and understands the legal aspects of school nursing practice.
- Performs duties in an ethical and professional manner.
- Is responsible and accountable for their practice in the school setting.
- Respects the confidentiality of client records and communication regarding the client.
- Follows recognized generally acceptable standards for ethical nursing performance.
- Possesses a working knowledge of the nursing process as well as a broad knowledge base from other disciplines such as environmental science, education, family theory, and psychology.
- Follows prescribed protocols including contacting school nurse appropriately (see *Critical Communication between School Nurses and School Staff* Guideline).